



## SOLAR Workshop Held in Huntsville, Alabama

### Special points of interest:

- *Thirty-five people, representing every NASA Training Center, attended the two-day workshop.*
- *Mr. Joe McElwee, Functional Manager for SOLAR and NASA e-Learning Programs, kicked off the workshop by sharing NASA's e-learning vision with the group.*
- *The SOLAR technical team reported 48,526 active user accounts with 47,724 as the number of tests taken in all disciplines so far this year.*

The second annual SOLAR Workshop was held December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2002, in Huntsville, Alabama, home of the SOLAR System and its development team. Thirty-five people, representing every NASA Center, attended the two-day workshop. Mr. Joe McElwee, Functional Manager for SOLAR and NASA e-learning programs, kicked off the workshop by sharing NASA's e-learning vision with the group.

This year's agenda included fourteen presentations and a group discussion/ break-out session. The SOLAR technical team covered topics such as: next generation objectives, metrics, capability update, content development process, LCMS study results, and AdminSTAR interface solution. In addition, participants gained insight into the SOLAR strategic marketing plan, e-learning and portals, and e-training services.



*SOLAR Workshop attendees break for a group photo  
(Photo by Doug Stoffer, NASA/Marshall Center)*

The presentations on IT security awareness and training, course development, section 508, and ADL and SCORM standards were also very comprehensive and informative.

The SOLAR technical team was proud to share the metrics demonstrating the benefits realized from software upgrades and hardware enhancements.

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## New Courses on SOLAR

### Basic IT Security for 2003 (ITS-001-02D)

The Basic Information Technology Security 2003 course provides an examination of security issues concerning technology systems and their information. Topics address how to use your system in a secure manner, how to recognize possible security incidents, and practices for protecting your systems and information.

All NASA employees, (civil servants and contractors), are required to complete this training within FY 03.

### IT Security for Managers 2003 (ITS-008-02D)

Information Technology Security for Managers 2003 covers the basic concepts, processes, and practices IT security addressed in the Basic Information Technology Security 2003 course. In addition, the IT security roles and responsibilities for managers will be covered, along with an overview of the concepts and practices of risk management.

This training is mandatory for all supervisors, line managers, ITSMs, CIOs, and other IT professionals.

## E-learning at Glenn Research Center



The employees at Glenn Research Center have enjoyed the benefits of technology-

based training since the Learning Center was created in 1984.

Through the years, the Learning Center has offered training in all subject areas, first on Umatic videotape, then on VHS, and now DVD. Computer training was first contained on 5 ¼ inch floppy disks, moving up to Interactive Video, CD ROM, and now, web-based e-learning.

Glenn's e-learning initiative started in Spring of 1999 when we embarked on a pilot program with the SkillSoft Corp. For a period of 4 weeks, 25 soft skills e-learning courses were available to 20 volunteers. At the end of this successful pilot, we were convinced this was a learning alternative we needed to make available on a permanent basis.

Later in 1999, we acquired 20 ElementK licenses and 15 NetG computer and IT courses. In September 2000, we increased the ElementK licenses to 46 and added 40 soft skills courses from SkillSoft

Corp. to the mix

Today, we offer a total of 260 courses from SkillSoft and 100 computer and IT courses from NetG. 50 ElementK licenses give users access to an additional 400 courses from their Computer Professionals Library. Nearly 700 total licenses are currently in use enabling Glenn employees to take advantage of top shelf on-line learning on hundreds of topics anytime and anywhere.

*(Article submitted by Annette Rostetter, Glenn Research Center)*

## SOLAR Workshop Held in Huntsville, Alabama-cont'd

The help desk reported an average of 226 trouble tickets per month in 2001 and only 79 trouble tickets per month in 2002; a 402% improvement! Of note, these tickets had to do mainly with password reset and instructions, not system discrepancies. The team also reported 48,526 active user accounts with 47,724 as the number of tests taken in all disciplines so far this year. As a final point, participants were given details of the AdminSTAR interface on SOLAR, a significant feature the team is planning to release next.

An open group discussion of the SOLAR-End User Input yielded excellent feedback. Among the ideas and recommendations was the re-design of SOLAR's "Bulletin Board" feature to enhance collaboration among Training Centers. Also discussed was the NASA e-learning portal initiative and how this effort may impact SOLAR, new marketing approaches at the Centers, key development areas for the SOLAR team to focus on next year, and improvements to the current system.

An awards dinner followed the first day of presentations. Members of the SOLAR team were recognized for achievement in product development. Two special SOLAR Star Awards were given to Louise Setzer and Colleen Davis for their help desk support throughout the year.



## Suggested SOLAR Workshop Topics for 2003

Participants at the second annual SOLAR workshop were asked the following survey question: In addition to the topics presented in the past two days, which topics do you feel would be of value to cover at the next SOLAR workshop? The following responses were submitted: 1. How all NASA systems are working together and how they overlap—

SOLAR/eLearning/NORS/AdminSTAR/APPL/IFM/CIO. 2. Integrated marketing efforts. 3. Next generation. 4. E-learning and portals. 5. SCORM updates 6. How SOLAR could be integrated into the total NASA learning environment, not just on-line custom courses, but everything available to employees. 7. AdminSTAR interface solutions. 8. SO-

LAR capability update 9. CBT within the federal government and where it's going in the next 5-10 years. 10. Development of "My SOLAR" equivalent/complement to the upcoming NASA portal. 11. More brainstorming by the group to make SOLAR better.

*(Thank you for your suggestions. We'll keep them in mind when preparing the 2003 agenda!—The SOLAR Team)*

## The Role of E-learning-Part I-The Vision for America

*(The following article includes excerpts from A Vision of e-learning for America's Workforce-Report of the Commission on Technology and Adult Learning<sup>1</sup> and is presented here as Part I of a three-article series on e-learning. Part II will focus on NASA's e-learning strategic plan. Part III will discuss how NASA's plan ties directly to all e-learning projects and initiatives in 2003.)*

In 2000, the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and the National Governors Association (NGA) organized the Commission on Technology and Adult Learning. Its mission was “to define and encourage a technology-enabled learning environment that will result in an engaged citizenry and a skilled workforce for the digital economy.”

The Commission identified three priority areas for action, focusing on the critical issues of quality,

assessment and certification, and access.

It called on public and private sector leaders to work together to accomplish the following:

1. *Create the highest-quality e-learning experiences possible.*
2. *Implement new measures and methods for assessing and certifying what individuals know and are able to do.*
3. *Ensure broad and equitable access to e-learning opportunities.”*

According to the report, creation of the highest quality e-learning experience would deliver instructionally sound content to the learner at the right time; ensure the learner has mastered the knowledge and skills; and motivate the learner to apply the learning to improve individual and organizational performance.

The commission noted that the

current quality assurance process for measuring the e-learning experience relies on metrics based on utilization and completion rates, rather than the valued added or outcome of the learning experience. The report called for “a greater emphasis on value added or outcomes” rather than the reliance on utilization or completion rates. This, in turn, will “assure the quality of e-learning.”

The second priority area, assessment and certification, called for the “development and promotion of outcome-based measures for certifying what individuals know and are able to do.” It also called for the development of reliable assessment and certification methods to ensure fairness in the testing, assessment, and certification of individual's knowledge and skills. A performance evaluation component should demonstrate learning results

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## SOLAR 1.6 Release Update

SOLAR version 1.6 release has been re-scheduled for March, 2003.

According to the technical team, the focus of the release will be the AdminSTAR interface and the Single Sign On (SSO) capability for the Site for Online Learning and Resources (SOLAR). The release will also include some additional software changes—input and recommendations resulting from the SOLAR Workshop in December.

The much anticipated SSO feature will allow users to access multiple learning web applications through a single login function. This will mean that a single user ID and password will give them access

to those applications. For example, when the NASA Online Registration System (NORS) application is released, it will use the SSO capability. For the upcoming release, however, the SSO feature will only have SOLAR as a selectable option.

In addition to providing a single entry point for the SOLAR and NORS web applications, the SSO application will be the controlling application for establishing and maintaining Learner accounts to be used by these applications and the AdminSTAR client-server application. Creation of the SSO capability will provide additional benefits to the AdminSTAR Administrators as they will be able to use their SSO - User ID and Pass-

word to login to AdminSTAR using the current login screen. The interface will send test results from SOLAR to the Learner's training records in AdminSTAR, providing a single source for training records.

The upcoming release will also include the addition of an administrator function for the SSO process and a revision to the AdminSTAR interface.

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**“CREATION OF THE SINGLE SIGN ON CAPABILITY WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO THE ADMINSTAR ADMINISTRATORS”**



## Customer Service

Need help using the system to access or complete courses?

Contact the Help Desk at:

Help Desk (256) 544-7600

Toll Free (866) 419-6297

Email: [solar.support@msfc.nasa.gov](mailto:solar.support@msfc.nasa.gov)

Interested in using SOLAR for your training needs?  
Please contact:

Dr. Tony Lopez (858) 495-0508

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## SOLAR 1.6 Release Update-*cont'd*

This revision, resulting from the input received at the SOLAR workshop in December, will allow SOLAR to record test scores more than once for those courses that require recertification on a periodic basis.

For further information, please contact Marisa Wofford at (256) 544-7482 or by e-mail at: [Marisa.Wofford@msfc.nasa.gov](mailto:Marisa.Wofford@msfc.nasa.gov), or Terry Carlson at (256) 544-2461 or by e-mail at: [Terry.F.Carlson@msfc.nasa.gov](mailto:Terry.F.Carlson@msfc.nasa.gov).

## The Role of E-learning Part I-*The Vision-cont'd*

rather than focus on completion rate. According to the report, *"the results should also be measured with the aid of objective analysis by instructors and/or peers."*

The last priority area, to ensure broad and equitable access to e-learning opportunities, called for the adoption of common technical standards and high level support and promotion of e-learning. *"In addition, a variety of real and potential attitudinal, cultural, and structural barriers must be addressed in order to realize e-learning's potential..."*

<sup>1</sup> The complete report, published in 2001, is available under the "public policy" page at [www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org)

## Letter from the Editor



We hope you enjoy reading the third issue of the NASA e-Learning Newsletter. The previous issues are available online at the SOLAR website, <https://solar.msfc.nasa.gov>.

We did not publish in December. However, the publishing schedule remains bimonthly.